

The Pressures of Caregiving

As the world continues to grapple with ongoing COVID cases, school protocol changes, limitations on seeing one another at times and working from home, it's important to recognize the other factors that come into play as well; namely caregiving. Whether its balancing work and school schedules, working remotely, or taking on the care of an elderly relative or other family member; more and more people are struggling with juggling additional care roles.

Learn to Live recognizes that these additional strains on your time and energy can also affect your mental health. Below are some strategies from a few of our programs to help guide you as you navigate these difficult times.

Practice Present Awareness: When we are overwhelmed with to-do lists and thoughts on how to care for ourselves *and* our family members, we can step back for even a few minutes to do the following:

1. Use your five senses and draw your attention to what is around you.
2. Acknowledge the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that are distracting you.
3. Pause what you are doing and mindfully focus on your breathing.

Schedule Worry Time: Ever find yourself worrying so much about how you'll manage life's challenges that it gets hard to focus on the things you really care about? By setting aside a specified time each day to focus on those worries, we gain the freedom to turn toward the important things of the here and now. When a concern pops up, we can set it aside until our designated worry time.

Use Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Tense muscles? Headaches? Trouble relaxing or sleeping? It may be linked to stress... but it doesn't have to stay that way! Bring your breathing and body closer to a state of *calmness* as you learn from muscle tension and relaxation using Learn to Live's Progressive Muscle Relaxation strategy. Our clinical team can walk you through this strategy in real time, listen [here](#).